

REMARKS

Claims 1-36 are now pending in the application. By this amendment, Claims 1-20 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein and Claims 21-36 have been added. The basis for these new claims can be found throughout the specification, claims, and drawings originally filed. No new matter has been added. The preceding new claims and the following remarks are believed to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action and are believed to place the application in condition for allowance.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained therein.

SPECIFICATION

The specification stands objected to for certain informalities. Applicants have amended the specification according to the Examiner's suggestions. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested. Furthermore, Applicants have replaced Paragraphs [0003]-[0006] to correct typographical errors and more accurately describe the field of the invention. No new matter has been added.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-20 have been cancelled without prejudice. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is moot.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Fukutomi (U.S. Pat. No. 6,688,671). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-20 have been cancelled without prejudice. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is moot.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 18 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fukutomi (U.S. Pat. No. 6,688,671) in view of Kitagawa (U.S. Pat. No. 6,312,045). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-20 have been cancelled without prejudice. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is moot.

NEW CLAIMS

Applicants have added new Claims 21-36. Of these, Claims 21, 26, and 30 are independent claims, each featuring for a load transfer element operable to transfer an applied load "while minimizing energy absorption of said applied load." See Specification at Paragraph [0017]. The rigidity of the load transfer element allows for an almost immediate transfer of energy from a door assembly (76) to a structural pillar (80) if a load is applied to the door assembly. See Paragraph [0023]-[0025].

The Examiner, in rejecting cancelled Claims 1-17, cited Fukutomi as teaching an impact absorption member (40) that is considered to be relatively rigid. Furthermore, the Examiner noted that the impact absorption member (40) is described as compressing and deforming another element (presumably impact absorbing member (30)) and therefore is a rigid member itself. Applicants respectfully disagree. Fukutomi discloses an impact absorbing member (40) that absorbs energy through deformation. Specifically, Fukutomi notes that "the deformation of the impact absorption member 40 also enables absorption of impact energy." See Fukutomi at Col. 3, Ins. 59-60. In this manner, the impact absorption member of Fukutomi necessarily deforms and therefore does not minimize energy absorption of an applied load.

Because Fukutomi fails to disclose an load transfer element that minimizes energy absorption of an applied load, Applicants respectfully submit that new Claims 21-37 are allowable.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this

application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600 or
Ralph Edwin Smith at (248) 944-6500.

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Respectfully submitted,

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